

Appendix C: Priority Refuge and District Operational and Maintenance Needs

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The CCP directs an ambitious course for the future management of Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge and Wetland Management District. The following provides a brief description of the second-highest priority Refuge and District projects. The highest priority, or Tier 1, projects are described in Chapter 5 of the plan. Each project description also includes the number of a corresponding strategy; linking it to the Goals/Objectives/Strategies section of Chapter 4.

Most of these projects are listed in the Refuge Operating Needs System (RONS); the Service's national database of unfunded operational activities. The RONS was established in 1990 as a planning, budgeting, and communication tool to enhance identification of funding and staffing needs for the National Wildlife Refuge System. RONS projects describe the need for new or expanded activities in order to implement plans, attain goals, or satisfy legal mandates. Data within RONS are used regularly in budget justifications presented to the Department of the Interior, the Office of Management and Budget, and Congress.

The Maintenance Management System (MMS) is another database used by the Service to document needed equipment and construction projects. The MMS is structured around property items while RONS focuses on management activities. All large-scale (typically over \$500,000) construction projects are housed in MMS.

Replace Shakopee and Rapids Lake Maintenance Facilities. The Refuge will seek funds for upgrading and replacing the existing maintenance facilities at Shakopee and the Rapids Lake Unit. The Shakopee facility will consist of a single building containing a heated bay, cold storage, and a small office. The Rapids Lake maintenance facility will consist of no less than four heated stalls plus a heated carpentry shop. This facility will also be capable of housing all Refuge equipment in cold storage. **Strategies 6.10.14 & 6.10.15.** Estimated cost: \$1,200,000

Continue Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program Activities. The continuance of a progressive and opportunist Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program near the Refuge and throughout the District is of extreme importance. Through this program, the Refuge builds good will throughout the community and contributes to quality habitat restoration activities on private lands. Appropriated habitat restoration funds are frequently matched by contributions from a very supportive private conservation community. **Strategy 5.4.4.** Estimated cost: \$200,000 annually.

Establish Prairie Grass, Forb, and Root Propagation Nurseries. In support of a Regional effort to utilize local eco-type seeds, the Refuge will establish grass, forb, and tree propagation facilities and nurseries. This facility will assist in developing a local seed source for use across the Refuge and throughout the District. Equipment for harvesting and handling locally produced seeds will also be acquired. **Strategy 4.1.5.** Estimated cost: \$400,000.

Review and Revise Refuge's Interpretive Plan. As soon as practicable, the Refuge will seek operation funding to review and review its interpretive plan. The revised plan will form the basis for new environmental education and wildlife interpretive programming.

It will also for the basis for upgrading and replacement of current Visitor Center exhibits and interpretive kiosks. **Strategy 6.5.1.** Estimated cost: \$100,000.

Upgrade and Improve Exhibits in the Visitor Center. Following the review of the Refuge Interpretive Plan, exhibits, displays, audio visual equipment, and productions will be upgraded. As part of this project, information about the Refuge and the Refuge system will be developed and upgraded regularly. Minnesota Valley NWR is an urban refuge located within an hours drive of three million people. **Strategy 6.5.2.** Estimated cost: \$1,000,000.

Seek Funding for Completion of State Trail Across Refuge's Long Meadow Lake Unit. In cooperation with MnDNR and others, the Refuge will seek funding and materials to complete the section of the Minnesota Valley State Trail that lies between Old Cedar and Lyndale Avenues. **Strategy 6.11.2.** Estimated cost: Unknown.

Seek Funding for Replacement of Old Cedar Bridge. In cooperation with the City of Bloomington, Minnesota Department of Transportation, MnDNR, the biking community, and others, the Refuge will seek funding for the replacement of the Old Cedar Avenue Bridge with a new pedestrian/bicycling bridge. **Strategy 6.11.3.** Estimated cost: Unknown.

Prepare Restoration Plan and Seek Funding to Repair and Stabilize Bloomington Bluffs. In cooperation with the City of Bloomington, the Friends of Minnesota Valley, Lower Minnesota River Watershed District, Refuge neighbors, and the biking community, the Refuge will complete a bluff restoration plan that, upon implementation, will repair and stabilize the erosion and gullying that occurs along the Bloomington Bluff. The partners will seek funding for costs associated with this project once the plan is completed. **Strategy 6.7.2.** Estimated cost: Unknown.

Develop Hiking and Biking Trails on Bloomington Ferry and Upgrala Units. In cooperation with the cities of Eden Prairie and Shakopee, Refuge neighbors, and Murphy's Landing, develop a hiking and biking trail that connects River View Road with the City of Shakopee trails near State Highway 101. Also, develop a hiking and biking trail that connects the Upgrala Unit with the Bloomington Ferry Unit. In addition, also cooperate in the development of a river ferry crossing that connects Murphy's Landing with the Upgrala Unit. **Strategies 6.11.5 & 6.11.6.** Estimated cost: Unknown

Restore Floodplain Forest. Restore 150 acres of flood plain forest in the Minnesota River bottoms. This land was previously row cropped and needs to be planted with species native to the river bottoms. The planting will benefit many species of wildlife, especially migrant songbirds that depend on large tracts of contiguous forest. Other species such as migratory waterfowl, especially wood ducks, bald eagles, herons and several species of concern will benefit from the plants. The Refuge will work in partnership with the Minnesota Waterfowl Association as well as several other local conservation groups to secure matching funds. **Strategy 1.1.6.** Estimated cost: Unknown

Provide Bus Transportation Funds For Inner City Schools. This project will provide funds to bus children from inner city schools to the Refuge for environmental education programming. Among other benefits, this project will assist the Refuge and the Service

in reaching out to diverse audiences who may have an interest in natural resource issues. **Strategy 6.6.4.** Estimated cost: \$75,000 annually.

Improve Refuge Access to Persons with Disabilities. By 2003, all Refuge facilities and programs will be reviewed to determine what measures need to be taken to make them more accessible to disabled persons. Following this review, a plan will be developed and funding will be sought to make these improvements to Refuge facilities and programs. **Strategy 6.10.2.** Estimated cost: Unknown.

Upgrade Visitor Center Parking Lots and Install Water Garden: As soon as practical, the Visitor Center parking lots will be upgraded to address some long-term drainage problems that have existed since construction. In addition, the lots will be modified to direct storm waters into the unpaved portions of the area where a water garden will be constructed. This water garden will demonstrate how parking lots can be designed to reduce pollutants entering downstream wetlands, lakes and streams, including Long Meadow Lake. **Strategy 5.1.4** Estimated cost: unknown.

Public Use Facility Upgrade: Identify funding for the upgrade of all Refuge parking lots, kiosks, trails and boardwalks. Within each parking lot, the gates, kiosks, brochure boxes, and post and rail will be repaired, replaced and otherwise upgraded to a high standard. In addition, these facilities will be modified to ensure they are accessible to disabled people. **Strategies 6.10.2 and 6.10.10.** Estimated cost: \$250,000.

